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REFLECTIONS
UPON
THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN
IN
CHARITY SCHOOLS;
WITH
THE OUTLINES OF A PLAN OF APPROPRIATE
INSTRUCTION
FOR
THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR;
SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF
THE PATRONS
OF SCHOOLS OF EVERY DENOMINATION,
SUPPORTED BY CHARITY.

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By MRS. TRIMMER.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. LONGMAN, PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND
J. AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M.DCC.XCII.

REFLECTIONS

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

CHARITY SCHOOLS

THE OUTLINE OF A PLAN OF ADOPTABLE

INSTRUCTION

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK



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THE PARENTS

OF SCHOOLS OF EVERY DENOMINATION

PREPARED BY CHARITY

BY MISS TRIMMER

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MILLET

REFLECTIONS
UPON
THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN
IN
CHARITY SCHOOLS, &c.

HAVING formed a plan for a course of instruction peculiarly adapted to the children of the poor, and prepared several articles of it for publication, I thought it incumbent upon me to explain my motives for an undertaking, which to some may appear superfluous, and to others assuming, since the world already abounds with elementary books for Charity Schools, many of which were written by authors of the most eminent abilities, and highest reputation.

But first I shall beg leave to submit to the consideration of the benevolent a few hints which experience and observation have suggested to my mind, concerning those institutions which afford gratuitous instruction to the children of the poor, more particularly such as are distinguished from *Sunday*

Schools and Schools of Industry, by the name of
CHARITY SCHOOLS.

The important question, Whether it is consistent with sound policy to bestow education upon children in the lowest classes of life, has employed the pens of some of our best writers in the last and present centuries; and we may judge from the wonderful increase of schools supported by charitable contributions, that it is at length generally decided in the affirmative.

The objection against giving learning to the poor, lest it raise them above their situation, is completely obviated by making such learning as general as possible; for then it ceases to give pre-eminence, or to be a distinction, and must eventually qualify all better to fill their respective stations in society: and nothing could be thought of so well calculated to diffuse a moderate and useful share of learning among the lower orders of people, as these schools. To this I may add, that as literature has made such considerable advances in the kingdom, the poor seem to have a just claim to more liberal instruction than was formerly allotted to them. But there still subsist various opinions in respect to the

the manner in which they ought to be educated, more particularly, whether the mode of *religious instruction* adopted at the first established CHARITY SCHOOLS, in this kingdom, should be continued in them, and extend to the institutions of the present day; or whether charity children in general, but particularly those trained in *Sunday Schools*, and *Day Schools of Industry*, should not be taught upon a plan limited chiefly to lessons of morality.

It is well known that those useful establishments, for which the nation is originally indebted to the wisdom and piety of our ancestors, and in which many thousands of children are constantly training in habits of piety, virtue, and decorum, have owed their chief support, from the beginning, to annual subscriptions and voluntary benefactions, collected at the preaching of charity sermons; we cannot therefore wonder that some of the trustees and managers of Charity Schools, from zeal for their welfare, should at first have viewed with a jealous eye the rapid progress of other institutions for the instruction of poor children, from an apprehension that the success of the one might interfere with the interests of the other, as they mutually depend

on the same means for support. But *Sunday Schools* and *Schools of Industry* have already existed long enough to prove that these fears were ill-grounded; for the beneficence of the present age is proportionate to its opulence, and every species of charity meets with ready contributors; so that there cannot be any real danger of the decay of *Charity Schools*, if they be properly conducted. Nothing can give *Sunday Schools* and *Schools of Industry* a preference to them, unless they afford better instruction.

It is much to be lamented, that institutions respectively calculated, by their reflective and united benefits, to complete the long-desired end, of educating all degrees of people in the lower ranks of life suitably to their various stations and callings, should ever be regarded in the light of rivalry and competition. *Charity Schools* hold out such superior advantages, in some respects, as to give them a decided pre-eminence over all the subsisting establishments for gratuitous instruction, as the money collected for them is usually sufficient to afford clothing to the children, as well as learning; and in many *Charity Schools* the children are entirely maintained in the house,

house, and some of them afterwards apprenticed to trades and manufactures.

But *Sunday Schools* and *Schools of Industry*, though the emoluments of the children are less, are of equal importance with the above institutions, as they afford instruction to unlimited numbers of children, who could not be admitted into *Charity Schools*, on account of the expense attending them; neither could such multitudes be trained up as *Charity Children* are, without great injury to society: for, however desirable it may be to rescue the lower kinds of people from that deplorable state of ignorance in which the greatest part of them were for a long time suffered to remain, it cannot be right to train them *all* in a way which will most probably raise their ideas above the very lowest occupations of life, and disqualify them for those servile offices which must be filled by some of the members of the community, and in which they may be equally happy with the highest, if they will do their duty.

Many ill consequences are observed to arise among the higher orders of people from educating the children of persons whose opulence is the fruit of their own industry, and who have

made themselves respectable without the aid of literary acquirements, together with those whose parents are of high rank and independent fortune; but this injudicious practice we cannot expect to see abolished while in the education of youth so much regard is paid to externals, and so little to the regulation of the heart and the improvement of the understanding. It will, however, readily be allowed, that the children of the poor should not be educated in such a manner as to set them above the occupations of humble life, or so as to make them uncomfortable among their equals, and ambitious of associating with persons moving in a higher sphere, with whom they cannot possibly vie in expense or appearance without manifest injury to themselves.

But there are degrees of poverty as well as of opulence; and if it be improper to educate the children of the higher classes promiscuously, it surely must be equally so to place all the children of the poor upon the same footing, without any regard to the different circumstances of their parents, or their own genius and capacity. It would be thought very cruel to send the child, or orphan, of a pious clergyman, or a respectable but reduced tradesman,

tradesman, to be brought up among the offspring of thieves and vagabonds in the schools so happily and judiciously founded for those most wretched of all poor children, by the Philanthropic Society ; and it would appear very absurd to send a boy designed for husbandry to the Marine Society, to be educated in the art of navigation.

Yet nothing is more common than to mix poor children together in *Charity Schools*, whose separate claims to the superior advantages which these institutions hold out, are by no means equal, and whose mental abilities will bear no comparison.

It would be justly deemed very illiberal to refuse to lads of bright parts, and uncommon activity of mind, the learning which *Charity Schools* afford, and consign them to the labours of the field ; but is it not equally injurious, both to society and individuals, to condemn those who are invincibly dull and stupid to literary studies, as irksome to them as the most servile occupations are to boys of quick parts and aspiring tempers ?

If there be among the poor children of a parish any who have been born to good prospects, who have enjoyed in their earliest years
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the comforts of affluence, and who still have respectable connections, it will be an act of particular kindness to place them in *Charity Schools*, where they will receive such an education as may hereafter prove a means of restoring them to their former station. And if there be others whose bright genius breaks through the thick clouds of ignorance and poverty, reason and humanity plead in their behalf, that they should be indulged with such tuition as may enable them to advance themselves, by the exertion of their abilities, to a higher station, and fill it with propriety. It certainly would be very unjustifiable to deny such children a chance of bettering their condition.

For a considerable length of time it has been the usual custom to admit boys and girls into *Charity Schools* from the principle of lightening the burden of their parents, without any particular regard to their capacity for learning. Indeed, before the establishment of *Sunday Schools*, there was no opportunity of giving them a probationary trial; but the happy period is at length arrived, which affords suitable instruction for poor children of all descriptions, for there
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is scarcely an employment or condition in humble life to which there is not a school adapted; the great difficulty seems to be, to form an accurate judgment of the objects for each particular charity, in order to make a proper selection of them.

IN CHARITY SCHOOLS a comprehensive plan of tuition holds forth advantages proper for the *first degree* among the lower orders, who in these seminaries might be qualified for teachers in schools supported by charity, for apprentices to common trades, and for domestic servants in respectable families.

DAY SCHOOLS OF INDUSTRY, by mixing labour with learning, are particularly eligible for such children as are afterwards to be employed in manufactures, and other inferior offices in life, as well as for training those who are usually called *common servants*.

And SUNDAY SCHOOLS, while they hold out religious instruction suitable to all degrees of poor children, furnish a sufficient portion of learning* for such as cannot be

* Excepting in the articles of writing and accounts, a little of which one could wish all the poor might obtain, though the sabbath day is not the proper time for these acquirements.

spared on week-days from the labours of the plough, or other occupations by which they contribute to the support of families.

Sunday Schools may also serve (as was before hinted) as probationary schools to try the capacities of children previously to their admission into *Charity Schools*.

Could this distribution of learning be universally made, I am persuaded a very material objection to *Charity Schools* would be effectually done away: for by this means children endowed by nature with good capacities, would be put in the way to improve them; and others, to whom liberal instruction would be no benefit, would be prevented from losing that time over books which they might turn to more advantage by employing it in manual occupations.

It appears from the account of *Charity Schools* given by the *Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge*, that there have been no less than 1631 of these schools established in Great Britain since the reformation; in which, allowing for the deficiency occasioned by some of them having been suffered to drop, there are still 40,000 children educated annually.

At

At the first view we are surprised at the number of scholars in these schools; yet, when we consider the multitudes of poor children there must necessarily be in such a populous kingdom as this, it will appear comparatively small: and it is proved to be actually so by the superior numbers which already receive instruction in Sunday Schools, amounting, as I have been informed, to 500,000; and even this is greatly short of the total number of poor children in the nation.

Day Schools of Industry have as yet made but little progress among us; but, from the happy success of an experiment at this time making in one of the most populous parishes in London*, we may reasonably hope to see, in the course of a few years, *Parochial Schools of Industry* in every parish of the metropolis, and in every town in England.

Till these Day Schools of Industry become

* The school here alluded to is one established about a year and a half ago, in the parish of Mary-le-bone, which is conducted on so excellent a plan, that it may properly serve as a pattern for other extensive parishes in London. For arguments in favour of Parochial Schools of Industry, I shall refer my reader to a Pamphlet, written by Mr. Thomas Simons, one of the principal managers of the above school. It is sold by Messrs. Rivington, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

a general concern, they may be tried upon a smaller scale at an easy expense. I am happy in being able to mention one for girls in the same neighbourhood*, which is admirably conducted by a Society of Ladies.

In this little seminary the advantages of a *Charity School* and a *Day School of Industry* are united, for all the girls are taught to spin, knit, and work at their needles; they are also taught to read, nor is religious instruction omitted, and a few of them are maintained in the house, and instructed in every thing requisite to qualify them for domestic servants. The annual subscriptions toward this school are in general half a guinea—the price of an *Opera Ticket*, as the benevolent foundress observed when she proposed its establishment. Here may be frequently seen young ladies, accustomed to move in the first circles of elegance and fashion, inspecting the economy of this humble school! Can a public entertainment, let the music be ever so enchanting, afford such real, heart-felt satisfaction, as the exercise of benevolence like this necessarily produces?

If schools of this kind are found to succeed in the metropolis, there is a still better

* No. 68, Edgware Road, near Portman Square.

chance for them in the country; and I have the happiness of knowing several which are very beneficial to their respective neighbourhoods, by furnishing well-educated servants, particularly one at St. Alban's, under the patronage and direction of a lady eminently distinguished for zeal, activity, and judgment, in the exercise of the most diffusive benevolence. This school has the additional advantage of an excellent mistress, who pays unremitting attention to the conduct of the children, and qualifies them for the various departments of domestic business, by attending to their several dispositions and capacities—a distinction of more importance than it may at first appear.

In this school Tables of Virtues and Vices are hung up in view, and each girl receives a ticket every night when her conduct in the day has been uniformly good; if any one has committed any of the faults enumerated in the Table of Vices, her ticket is withheld, and the offence marked in a book, which is occasionally examined by the noble patroness, whose consequent displeasure, expressed in a mild reprimand, is usually found a sufficient punishment,

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If Sunday Schools and Day Schools of Industry were universally established, the education of the poor might be happily conducted; for then it would be no injury to them, upon the whole, to reduce considerably the number of scholars in *Charity Schools*, in order that the rest might be maintained in the house, and kept apart from companions unsuitable to those intended for what may be called the superior stations of humble life, as well as from their own parents, many of whom, it is sad to say! are but too apt to defeat the endeavours of those who instruct their children, by encouraging them in gossiping, tale-bearing, impertinence, and ingratitude; and very frequently by setting them examples of vice and profligacy.

This judicious measure of reducing the number of scholars for the purposes above mentioned, has been successfully pursued by the trustees of some of the *Charity Schools*; and the establishment of *Parochial Day Schools*, should it become general, will render it still more practicable, because the children who are excluded from the one, might be received by the other. But if *Charity Schools* cannot be put entirely upon this foot-

ing, they might surely be so contrived that all the children should, in succession, enjoy the benefit of this secluded education for the last year or two of their being at school, in order to receive that *degree of religious instruction* which Charity Schools were originally designed to afford.

In founding these schools our pious ancestors had evidently one great object in view, namely, to train the rising generation of poor in the principles of the Reformed Religion, by making them thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and the Liturgy of the Established Church. For the accomplishment of this purpose they conceived a considerable portion of time would be requisite. Under this idea, they thought proper to dispense with *manual labour* in the early years of life, and, instead of contriving how to procure *work* for the children, they allotted them tasks of a *literary nature* only, that those who were thus educated by the bounty of the public, might have full leisure to pursue studies of so much importance to their own eternal happiness, and the interests of true Christianity.

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To promote still farther their pious design of training the children of the poor in the knowledge and practice of religion and virtue, these truly Christian patrons required that charity boys and girls should be conducted to Church on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Holidays; and that they should be frequently and publicly catechised by the ministers of their respective parishes.

Whoever gives this plan attentive consideration will find that it was, upon the whole, properly calculated to answer the purposes for which it was intended, and well suited to the times; and I submit it to the determination of those who are well-wishers to that religion which our forefathers were so zealous to establish and propagate, whether it would not be better to continue to educate a *limited number* of boys and girls, with the same regard to the genuine principles of the Church of England, as one mean to prevent the spreading of those erroneous doctrines which strike at the very root of the Christian Religion, instead of attempting to overturn the former system, by making every *Charity School a Manufactory*.

Charity children thus educated might afterwards prove very instrumental to the propagation of true Christianity. They would be eminently qualified for the office of schoolmasters and mistresses in the various descriptions of Charity Schools, which very few of the present generation fill with propriety. They would most likely make good apprentices, and conscientious, faithful servants : such servants as would deserve to be preferred to the highest places in great families for their exemplary conduct ; in which situations they would be able to continue the instruction of such boys and girls from the Schools of Industry and Sunday Schools, as should be placed under them in the lowest offices of domestic services ; and, in case of matrimonial connection, they would be capable of teaching their own children ; which would eventually lessen the expence of *Sunday Schools* at least, and, in a great measure, prove a substitute for them, if they should unhappily fall into neglect.

I may farther add, that were the example of these persons in proportion to their knowledge, it would operate greatly towards bringing about that reformation of manners

which all who wish well to their country cannot but be anxious to see; and the advantages to those young persons who had been in *Sunday Schools* and *Schools of Industry*, would be inconceivably great were the upper servants capable and desirous of contributing to their future improvement, instead of corrupting their minds by improper discourse, and leading them astray by bad example; as is now too commonly the case.

It will be asked, Is it necessary, in order for children to learn the principles of Christianity, that they should spend their whole time in literary acquirements and going to Church? By no means: for the common purposes of life a small portion of time will suffice for the attainment of all that the poor have occasion to know or practise; and even those who are separated from the multitude to receive a greater portion of learning, may have time to do many useful things besides, as well as to recreate their minds by innocent amusements, which are particularly requisite for those young people who have sedentary employments *.

For

* It is, I believe, generally thought injudicious to excite an emulation in *Charity Boys* to write a fine hand; and, unless

For girls it is very easy to find intermediate employments; spinningwheels, both for wool and flax, should be constant appendages to *Charity Schools*, not only upon the principle of economy, but for exercise, particularly the long running-wheel, which will be found very conducive to the health of those children especially who belong to the Cha-

unless they are intended for teachers in schools, this certainly had better be avoided; neither should any but these be encouraged to make a proficiency in figures beyond what may be wanted for apprentices to common trades. The generality of charity boys may be more advantageously occupied in helping to teach the younger ones, and in committing different things to memory; and I cannot see why they might not be taught to mend their own shoes and stockings. Many a brave man, both in the army and navy, is obliged to do these things; and, admitting that a married man has a right to require his wife to repair his children's stockings, it cannot be expected that she should mend their shoes, for that is undoubtedly a masculine employment; and the father of a family would find it very comfortable to be able by this means to save his children from going barefooted. These employments, in addition to the usual ones of cleaning their own shoes, brushing their clothes, doing little offices for their master, cultivating a garden, &c. if there be one belonging to the school, added to assiduous attention to their tasks, would sufficiently fill up time, and accustom youth to industry, which might easily be directed afterwards to other pursuits,

rity Schools in London. They should also by turns do all the household work belonging to the school. Plain work is so evidently useful to women in general, but to the poor in particular, that no *Charity Girl* can be deemed properly educated who has not attained to a tolerable proficiency at her needle; and there cannot be a want of this kind of work in *Charity Schools* which are upon a small scale, if each girl be required not only to spin her own clothing, knit her own stockings, and make and mend her own clothes; but also be allowed to work occasionally for other branches of the family, in order to ease her mother.—But if a sufficiency of work be not supplied by these means, *Charity Girls* might contribute greatly to the comfort and conveniency of a neighbourhood by working for such poor women as are obliged to go constantly to daily labour, or who cannot use a needle themselves.—It would be a great addition to the comforts of the indigent and necessitous if ladies would kindly furnish materials, either old or new, to be made by *Charity Girls* into baby linen, or other articles of apparel, for them. Occupations of this kind, under the direction of a
clever

clever mistress, would produce reciprocal benefits to those who work and those who receive the fruits of their labour, for by these means girls would be trained up not only in habits of industry, but of contrivance and economy.

A great part of the business of religious instruction might be carried on while girls were thus occupied at their needles, if the mistresses would read to them, and question them; and if the generality of them learnt to write a tolerable hand, and to do common sums in the four first rules of arithmetic, it would be quite sufficient.

In *Schools of Industry* the business of literary instruction may be contracted into a narrower compass. In the school in the parish of St. Mary-le-bone before referred to, (see page 13) children, both boys and girls, attend the school-rooms and working-rooms alternately. As this institution is upon a very extensive scale, and already includes between 2 and 300 children, it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to manufactures for employment, for the teachers could not find time to attend to so many children employed in the ways I have recommended for *Charity Schools*.—The boys here put heads upon pins, and close shoes and boots intended for exportation. The girls

spin wool for a blanket manufacture, make shirts, &c. for a warehouse, spin flax for their own wear, and knit their own stockings. They are all taught to read, and some of them to write sufficiently for the common purposes of life.

It has been calculated, that supposing England and Wales to contain ten thousand parishes, and that but ten persons in every parish, one with another, were by some method employed who were idle before, then the whole number of persons set to work would be one hundred thousand; and, if they work but 300 days in a year, and one with another earned but a halfpenny a day, the produce of their labour would at the year's end amount to 62,500 pounds*."—Surely this calculation is a most powerful recommendation of Schools of Industry; and Mr. Simon's pamphlet, before referred to, furnishes an unanswerable argument for the addition of a little *learning*, in the account he has there given of the extreme ignorance of the male felons in the six jails of London, Southwark, and Westminster, taken May 11th, 1792.

* See the Proposal made by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to the Trustees of Charity Schools, in their annual report, for adding work to learning.

Considering

Considering the extent and variety of the manufactures of this country, one might suppose it would not be very difficult to procure employment for boys in Parochial Schools of Industry; and there is at this time an opening for the employment of many girls in wool-spinning, for a number of hands have forsaken this occupation to spin for cotton works, the latter being most profitable to them. Children in a school can spin for a lower price than those persons who have families to maintain.

I shall here refer my readers to a Pamphlet written by the Reverend Mr. Bowyer, concerning the rise and progress of a society for the promotion of industry in the county of Lincoln*; “the funds of which arise from three sources, *viz.* annual subscriptions, limited to *five shillings* each; casual benefactions; and parochial subscriptions, limited to the proportion of *one per cent.* on the last year’s rate.”

“Upon taking a general average of the profits of work done in the different schools under the direction of this Society, it is clearly

* Sold in London by Messrs. Harrison and Co. Booksellers, in Paternoster Row.

proved

proved that 135 children between 11 and 12 years of age, in the course of ten months, taken in the depth of the five preceding winters, earned the sum of 68ol. 3s. 3d. or half a crown a week each. This is exclusive of all the work done in the other months of those years, exclusive of the work of such spinners as were not expert enough to become candidates for certain prizes allotted for the reward of industry, and exclusive of work done in other parishes for which the spinners could claim nothing farther than the price of their labour."

This institution has been conducted with such extraordinary success, that a manufacture for stuffs of a very fine texture is now completely carried on in a county where, a few years ago, the children in general were totally abandoned to idleness.

The annual balls which have been given, first at Alford, and afterwards at Lincoln, in which the ladies appeared dressed in the stuff manufacture of the county, have been of singular service to the undertaking. Some lady of high rank is usually the patroness of these annual balls; and surely those who will thus condescend to appear in the fleecy attire

tire of the humble cottager for the purposes of charity, might easily be prevailed upon to contribute towards the establishment of institutions of a similar nature in the vicinity of their Town residences.

I cannot quit the subject of Schools of Industry without speaking of one which is conducted with great success in a retired village, without the aid of any manufacture whatever. This useful establishment is situated at Hartingfordbury, in the county of Hertford*, and took its rise from a Sunday School in that place.

The plan is this:—As the overplus of the Sunday School subscription was not enough to support a School of Industry, the parents of the children willingly agreed to pay three pence *per* week for each scholar. A small sum of money from the Sunday School fund was then laid out in purchasing materials for various articles of clothing at the wholesale

* An account of this school is given in a publication written by the ingenious projector of the plan; the title of it is, "Instructions for cutting out Apparel for the Poor, &c." With a preface, containing a plan for assisting the parents of poor children belonging to Sunday Schools, to clothe them, and other observations. It was originally sold by Mr. Walter, Charing Cross.

prices.

prices. These materials were made up in the schools into clothing, which was afterwards purchased by the parents, allowing them a deduction of one-fourth part of the prime cost of each article. The apparel purchased by the parents in one year was as follows :

36 Aprons, 49 caps, 11 gowns, 19 handkerchiefs, 9 petticoats, 44 shifts, 39 shirts, 48 pairs of stockings, 6 tippets, 69 pairs of shoes, 2 suits of boys' clothes. The total cost of this clothing was 33l. 13s. 7d $\frac{1}{2}$. It was sold for 25l. 5s. 2d $\frac{1}{2}$. The expence to the charity was 8l. 4s. 8d $\frac{1}{2}$.

In this school, as I have been informed, the girls are employed alternately, one week in knitting, one week in making new apparel, and the third week in mending their own clothes, or those of the family :—they are also taught to cut out and contrive the things they make.

Having in a former publication* given my sentiments respecting *Sunday Schools*, I shall only say at present, that repeated ex-

* Entitled the Economy of Charity.

perience has fully confirmed my opinion of their efficacy. I shall now proceed to make some further observations upon the *religious instruction* given in *Charity Schools*.

Notwithstanding the plan is still in force which was originally concerted for the purpose of giving the children* educated by charity a comprehensive knowledge of the principles of Christianity, and to exercise them betimes in the practice of piety; it must be acknowledged, that the education of children brought up in *Charity Schools* is in general very defective in these particulars. In order to discover from what cause the imperfection proceeds, it will be proper to inquire what is now the general mode of putting this plan in execution—which I conceive to be this:

The children, in most Charity Schools, are at first taught to read in a Spelling Book, the lessons of which consist chiefly of sentences collected from the scriptures, most of them in figurative language; as soon as they can read and spell a little, they are put into the New Testament, and when they have read this from beginning to end, they proceed to the

* See Page 17.

Old Testament, and go through that in the same manner, without regard to any thing farther than improvement in the *art of reading*. They learn, by stated regular tasks, the columns of spelling in the Spelling Book; and in some schools they are taught English grammar, writing, and arithmetic. Once or twice a week the scholars are catechised, that is, they stand up in classes, and answer in rotation the questions in the Church Catechism, and explanations of it. They learn, perhaps, besides, chapters, prayers, &c. by heart, and are sometimes taught psalmody. They go to church twice every Sunday, and, where there is weekly duty performed, they attend also on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Holidays. When the scholars leave school to go out into the world as servants or apprentices, a Bible, Common Prayer Book, and Whole Duty of Man, are given to them; and it is supposed, from the years they have been at school, they must necessarily be furnished with a competent share of Christian knowledge to enable them to read with advantage and improvement as long as they live.

How far the original plan of education an-

swered

swered at the first introduction of Charity Schools, is not easy to determine at this distance of time; but, for several obvious reasons, we may suppose that it was more effectual then than it is now; for it was very natural for those whose zeal for the reformed religion led them to establish and endow these schools, to continue their zeal towards the objects of their benevolence, to give personal attendance, and to examine the children themselves, in order to see whether their design was properly executed. Add to this, that public catechising was much more generally practised in former times than it has been of late years, as a means of preserving the principles of orthodox Christianity from corruption. So that, most probably, the children who were first received into Charity Schools had the benefit of more *verbal instruction* than those who now fill their places: of course they were not left, as many of the latter are, to the discretion of teachers ill qualified to explain difficult words and phrases, and illustrate points of doctrine, which frequently require to be placed in a variety of lights to be accommodated to the comprehension of children.

How

How the laudable custom of catechising fell into such disuse, I will not take upon me to say. It has been imputed to the unwillingness of the poor to send their children to be catechised; but surely this cannot be justly urged against the teachers in Charity Schools, who ought not to have a matter of such moment left to their option.

In many parishes the good old customs above mentioned are still kept up through the piety and benevolence of the resident ministers and other trustees, and a very manifest difference is observable between the children educated under these advantages, and those who have them not; yet I hope I may be allowed to say, without giving offence, that there is room for improvement upon the original plan, even when conducted with the greatest zeal and attention; and that where these are wanting, and the teacher is deficient in knowledge or judgment, whatever means can be devised to supply the deficiency of *verbal instruction*, have a reasonable claim to the consideration of the patrons of the poor, and the friends of Christianity, who cannot be insensible of the dangers to which the rising generation is exposed

exposed in this age of controversy and infidelity.

I would by no means wish to make the children of the poor *casuists* in religion; but it surely is desirable that they should have as extensive an acquaintance with its principles as they have leisure for acquiring; and of this those who are put to Charity Schools have a considerable portion, few of them having much manual employment.

Time is too valuable to be wasted or misapplied, yet it is an undeniable fact that there is a considerable loss of time and misapplication of study in many of the *Charity Schools* which are liberally endowed, and where the course of instruction is professedly very comprehensive, as any one may convince himself by examining the children belonging to them. I am sorry to reckon in the portion of ill-spent time that which is passed by many in the house of God, but those who occasionally attend on week days some of the churches, both in town and country, of which Charity Children form almost the whole of the congregation, have indisputable proofs, from the irreverent behaviour of the boys and girls when the eye of the master or mistress is not watching over them, and the

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manner in which they make the responses, that they neither consider where they are, or what they go to church for; and yet it is more than probable, that these very children can repeat many passages of Scripture by heart, as well as the answers of the church catechism, and explanations of it, &c.

In making these remarks, I do not mean to impute *carelessness* or *neglect* to the teachers; it is very likely they have done their duty to the best of their abilities: their scholars can read, write, and cast accounts, and have learnt every thing usually taught to Charity Children; we must therefore seek another cause to which the deficiencies here pointed out are assignable.—I do not scruple to say that they are in a great measure to be ascribed to the prevailing method of exercising the memories of children in learning by rote lessons greatly above their capacities, and suffering them to read without reflection, instead of initiating them by such simple instructions as would gradually unfold their understandings, and render their minds capable of receiving lasting impressions concerning things of the utmost importance to their present and future happiness.

The generality of *religious books*, now used
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in *Charity Schools*, have been written by men of deep erudition. Such authors, accustomed to read the works of the learned, and to compose in elegant language themselves, are apt to conclude that what is familiar to their own cultivated understandings must be universally intelligible; but it is far otherwise—the totally illiterate require previous instruction to prepare their minds for those lessons, which, however good and excellent, are almost as obscure to them as if they were written in a dead language.

It requires personal experience in the employment of teaching children of the lower classes of life, to enable any person to form an accurate judgment in respect to what they are capable of understanding: of this experience I have had a considerable share, having for several years given regular attendance as a visiter in Sunday Schools; I have also had frequent opportunities of examining children brought up in Charity Schools, and am convinced that the latter, in general, do little more than store their memories with *words* and *sentences*, or at best obtain a few crude indistinct notions of the great truths of

Christianity, unless they are so fortunate as to have very intelligent teachers to assist them in their studies by *verbal instructions*, suited to their tender capacities; the number of whom is proportionably very small, though sufficient to prove, by comparison, that the books in general use in *Charity Schools* are not fully adequate to the end of conveying to young minds such a thorough knowledge of the principles of religion as children ought to acquire in these schools, considering the time which is apparently devoted to the attainment of it.

I would not be suspected of entertaining a wish to see the valuable and condescending labours of some of the first writers laid entirely aside to make way for compositions unworthy of being compared with them. No! far humbler are my views; I only desire to see the works of the learned rendered effectual by means of books, in a more simple style, which may gradually lead on to them. Of such books my proposed publications for the children of the poor will consist; and I am much mistaken, if the others will not be sought with more earnestness, and bestowed to more advantage, after the minds of the
scholars

scholars have been prepared for comprehending their important contents.

The project of forming a practical system of education for the children of the poor has been long in my thoughts, and this is the second effort I have made towards the accomplishment of it.—The first consisted of the *Sunday School Catechist*, and *Sunday Scholar's Manual*; in which I attempted to prove, in a familiar manner, "The certainty of Divine Revelation—The truth and authenticity of the Scriptures—To give exalted ideas of the perfections of the supreme Being; and to fill up the outline of religious and moral duties, drawn with a most masterly hand in that part of the Church Catechism which relates to our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour."

The works now offered to the world are not designed as a *sequel* to those I here refer to, but as constituent parts of the proposed plan of appropriate instruction for the poor, which begins with the first rudiments of school tuition, and proceeds gradually to instructions suited to scholars in the highest classes, previously to their entrance into active life. In this system the above books

will be introduced, together with others of various authors.

The articles which I purpose to furnish towards this course of appropriate instruction are the following :

I. A SPELLING BOOK calculated for Charity Schools, in two Parts.—Part I. Containing the Alphabet—Easy Lessons—and Stories of Boys and Girls, in words of one syllable only. Part II. Consisting of Words divided into Syllables—Easy Lessons—Instructive Fables—Lessons with Scripture Names to prepare the scholar for reading the Bible with fluency, &c.

II. Scripture Lessons, extracted from the historical books of the Old Testament.

III. Scripture Lessons from the New Testament.

IV. Moral Instructions, collected from the Scriptures, suited to the practice of children and youth, to be committed to memory.

V. Lessons on the Liturgy, &c. in the Book of Common Prayer.

VI. Exemplary Tales, calculated to promote the practice of religion and virtue in the various occupations of humble life.

VII. The Teacher's Assistant, containing
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full directions for teaching, lecturing, and examining the children from day to day, as they proceed through the foregoing books.

The Spelling Book, the Abridgment of Scripture History, and two small volumes of the Teacher's Assistant, are already published.

The following reasons, added to the observations already made upon the books used in Charity Schools, will, I trust, be admitted as a sufficient apology for the undertaking.

I am very sensible that there is already a great variety of *Spelling Books*, by means of which hundreds of children have been taught to read and spell successfully; but I do not know of one to which I could have adapted the instruction which it was my design to give in the *Teacher's Assistant*: this difficulty induced me to compose a Spelling Book myself.

There is one article of it in particular which I have not met with in other Spelling Books—*Lessons with Scripture Names*, intended to prepare the children for reading the Bible with fluency.

In respect to the Abridgment of the Old and New Testament, to be used by learners instead of the Bible itself, I submit it to the

judgment of the most experienced instructors, whether children gain a competent knowledge, even of *Scripture History*, much less of the *Principles of Christianity*, by reading the entire contents of the sacred writings without discrimination? And whether such a method be not more likely to give them a distaste for the Scriptures, than to excite in their minds a desire to read and study them to the end of their lives?

The *Scriptures*, among other particulars which distinguish them from all the compositions of human art, and prove their divine original, have this remarkable one—that they are written to suit all ranks of people in the successive ages of the world, and every individual of them in all the various circumstances of human life; consequently the *whole* of the sacred writings cannot be designed by the great Author of them for the particular study of every person in every period of life, and in the various conditions or circumstances in which each may, in the course of this earthly existence, be placed.

The BIBLE is a most comprehensive volume, and those persons whose faculties have been enlarged by the most liberal education,
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and who have full leisure to study its multifarious contents, find numberless texts, and frequently whole passages, wrapped in impenetrable obscurity, from the cause above alluded to; that they were peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of generations that have passed away, or of generations yet to come. Various parts of scripture relating to the Jewish constitution, are instances of the former; and among the latter may be reckoned such prophecies as remain yet to be fulfilled.

The great object in reading the inspired writings certainly ought to be, to derive spiritual improvement from them; but can this be done to good effect by ignorant children reading it in the usual way, either by themselves or in a class? On the contrary, is it not a kind of profanation of the *word of God*, to make the sacred volume a mere *teaching book*, over which learners are to stammer and blunder to no good purpose? for children cannot easily learn by this practice, even to read with fluency and propriety, much less to reflect on the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in the works of creation, redemption, and providence. That it was the design of the Creator and Governor of the world, that children should have

have an early acquaintance with his word, we may learn from the scriptures themselves. *The words which God has commanded you*, said Moses to the Israelites, *ye shall lay up in your hearts; and ye shall teach them diligently unto your children**. *Train up a child in the way he should go*, said the wisest of men, *and when he is old he will not depart from it†*; and the prophet Isaiah says, *Whom shall he (the LORD) teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts ‡*.

But the same prophet adds, *Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line; here a little and there a little*; which plainly points out to us that religious knowledge should be communicated to the young and ignorant by degrees. How justly would that teacher be condemned who should set his pupil to read Euclid's Elements before he knew even the first rule in arithmetic; and is it not equally unreasonable to require children to go through the Scriptures, beginning with the New Testament too, before they know the first principles of religion?

* Deut. vi. 6. † Prov. xxvi. 6. ‡ Isai. xxviii. 9, 10.

To effect this something appears to me to be wanting in a more *familiar style* than the excellent directions for a devout and decent behaviour at public worship, which are usually bound up with the Common Prayer Books, supplied to Charity Schools by the Society for the Propagation of Christian knowledge: something that will awaken attention to every sentence of the service.

The end proposed by the Moral Tales which I purpose to furnish is to give the scholars a taste for improving books, and a contempt for those pernicious publications by which they very often corrupt their minds.

It now only remains to give some account of the *Teacher's Assistant*. The first volume of this work corresponds with the first part of the *Charity School Spelling Book*. It begins with instructions concerning the alphabet, and explains the lessons as the children read them. To these instructions are added lectures interspersed with questions. Some of these Lectures (being adapted to a Day School of Industry) are designed to make the scholars sensible of the blessing of a good education, the obligation they lay themselves under when they gain admittance into a school supported

supported by charity, to keep punctually to the rules of it; the gratitude they owe to their benefactors; and the advantages of industry.—The subsequent Lectures are intended for the use of Charity Schools of all denominations, being upon the first principles of Religion.

The second volume contains instructions suited to Part II. of the Charity School Spelling Book. The Lessons with Scripture names are divided and accented, that the Teacher may be at no loss in respect to dividing or pronouncing them. These instructions are followed by another set of Lectures, interspersed with Questions, upon the Divine Plan of Redemption; by means of which the scholars are conducted on a step farther in Religious Knowledge. To these Lectures is added an explanation of the Prayers and Hymns at the end of the Spelling Book. It is my intention to extend the *Teacher's Assistant* till it comprehends an explanation of every lesson which the scholars read or learn by heart, in the books prepared for their use. When the scholars shall have gone through the above books with the corresponding Lectures, I hope they will be able to search the Scriptures

Scriptures themselves, to understand Sermons, explanations of the Catechism, &c. and to improve their minds by reading the many excellent books which have been written for their edification, in a superior stile, by the learned.

I have not a doubt but that in general all possible care is taken by the trustees of Charity Schools in the choice of teachers, but though some few of the latter have had a proper education, the majority of them are incapable of giving verbal instructions on religious subjects. It is true that a most excellent plan has been laid down for them in Dr. Talbot's *Christian Schoolmaster*, but very few are competent to the execution of it. In the *Teacher's Assistant* I aspire to the honour of co-operating with the pious author of this most judicious and useful work, which I shall make use of as a direction to myself. My principal aim is to put masters and mistresses of Charity Schools into a method of giving that moral and religious instruction which the reverend author advises.

Nor will the course of instruction here proposed appear too extensive, I trust, if it be considered that the greatest part of it is given in
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the stile of familiar conversation, and will not occupy so much of the children's time as a more contracted course, in which they are required to commit to memory the words of the explanations of the Catechism, Common Prayer, &c. It is certainly proper they should have some tasks of this nature; but let me add, there are besides *memory* other faculties in the mind, of even the meanest human creature, which require culture.

Children admitted into Charity Schools have usually several years tuition.—What a happy opportunity does this afford for imparting to them a perfect knowledge of the principles of Christianity! Surely *these* children at least may be taught every part of that holy religion which was designed by the divine Author of it for the Poor as well as the Rich.—There is no occasion to confine *them* to what are usually called the *moral parts* of the scripture; neither is it in fact necessary to circumscribe those educated in *Schools of Industry* and *Sunday Schools* within such narrow bounds.

Faith is a general concern as well as *morality*, for it is as plainly required in the New Testament. Our blessed Lord called upon all kinds of people *to have faith*, which he would not

not have done, if he had not known that all might have it who were willing to believe the revealed word of God. So far from desiring that the mysteries of the gospel revelation should be withheld from the lower orders of people, our Saviour vouchsafed to instruct multitudes of them himself in the most sublime truths of his holy religion.—He told them without reserve, that he was the Son of God; that he was one with the Father; that he should lay down his life for mankind; that there is a Holy Ghost, who is also one with the Father and the Son; and many other particulars: and he expressly enjoined his apostles *to preach the gospel to the poor*.—He also said to his disciples, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not*;—and one of his last injunctions to Peter was, *Feed my lambs*. All this the Apostles did—*freely they had received, and freely they gave*; not with a niggardly hand did they dispense the bread of life, but with unbounded liberality;—the Spirit of God co-operated with them, and the word multiplied like the loaves and fishes.—From hence we may fully infer that the poor, in all succeeding ages, ought to be made acquainted, not merely with such parts of scripture as relate to *moral duties*,

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but with those also which relate to *Christian Faith*; and childhood is the proper season for receiving the rudiments of religious knowledge, as well as of other learning.

I will venture to assert, from my own experience, that it is as practicable to teach children every point of Christian doctrine, as the plainest moral precept in either the Old or New Testament.—The present state of religion in this country calls loudly for the experiment; and where can it be made with more propriety than in Charity Schools? which were at first established for the express purpose of training the poor in the genuine principles of the reformed religion.—If in former times it was thought necessary to guard the rising generation against the *errors of popery*, it is equally so now to fortify young minds against false opinions of as fatal a tendency. In order to enforce what I have here asserted concerning Christian Faith, I shall take the liberty of borrowing some of the powerful arguments of a learned prelate*, which, though addressed to the clergy of a particular diocese, are of general application.

To pretend that “ faith and practice are fe-

* See the present Bishop of St. David's Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese in the year 1790.

parable things (says the learned and pious author) is a gross mistake, or rather a manifest contradiction—practical holiness is the end; faith is the means; and to suppose faith and practice separable, is to suppose the end attainable without the use of the means. The direct contrary is the truth. The practice of religion will always thrive, in proportion as its doctrines are generally understood and firmly received; and the practice will degenerate and decay, in proportion as the doctrine is misunderstood and neglected.

“ I am well aware, that it has been very much the fashion to suppose a great want of capacity in the common people, to be carried any great length in religious knowledge, more than in the abstruse sciences. That the world and all things in it had a Maker; that the Maker of the world made man, and gave him the life which he now enjoys; that he who first gave life, can at any time restore it; that he can punish in a future life, crimes which he suffers to be committed with impunity in this; some of these first principles of religion the vulgar, it is supposed, may be brought to comprehend. But the peculiar doctrines of revelation, the Trinity of persons in the undivided

Godhead, the incarnation of the second person, the expiation of sin by the Redeemer's sufferings, the efficacy of his intercession, the mysterious commerce of the believer's soul with the divine Spirit—these things are supposed to be far above their reach.

“ If this were really the case, the condition of mankind would indeed be miserable, and the proffer of mercy in the gospel little better than a mockery of their woe. For the consequence would be, that the common people could never be carried beyond the first principles of what is called natural religion. Of the efficacy of Natural Religion as a rule of action, the world has had the long experience of 1600 years; for so much was the interval between the institution of the Mosaic church and the publication of the Gospel. During that interval certainly, if not from an earlier period, Natural Religion was left to try its powers on the heathen world. The result of the experiment is, that its powers are of no avail. Among the vulgar, Natural Religion never produced any effect at all; among the learned much of it is to be found in their writings, little in their lives. But if this Natural Religion, a thing of no practical efficacy, as experiment

periment has demonstrated, be the utmost of religion which the common people can receive; then is our preaching vain, Christ died in vain, and man must perish. Blessed be God, the case is far otherwise. As we have on the one side experimental proof of the insignificance of what is called Natural Religion; so on the other, in the success of the first preachers of Christianity, we have an experimental proof of the sufficiency of Revealed Religion to those very ends, in which Natural Religion failed. In their success we have experimental proof, that there is nothing in the great mystery of godliness, which the vulgar, more than the learned, want capacity to apprehend; since upon the first preaching of the Gospel, the illiterate, the scorn of pharisaical pride, who knew not the law, and were therefore deemed accursed, were the first to understand, and to embrace the Christian Doctrine.

“ Nor will this seem strange, if it be considered, that Religion and Science are very different things, and the objects of different faculties. Science is the object of natural Reason; Religious Truth, of Faith. Faith, like the natural faculties, may be improved by exercise; but in its beginning it is unquestionably

ably a distinct gift of God. Were it otherwise the common people would be just as incapable of receiving these principles of natural religion, which are thought so simple, and so much within the reach of popular apprehension, as the higher mysteries of the Gospel; for I scruple not to assert, that no proof can be more subtle in its process, or in its principles more abstruse, however just in its conclusions, than the arguments which philosophy furnishes, of the being and attributes of God, and the immortality of the human soul. By mere argument, therefore, addressed to their reason, no conviction could be wrought, in the minds of the common people, of the very first principles of Religion. By Faith, their minds are opened to apprehend all that is revealed of the scheme of Redemption, no less than the very first principles, the doctrine of a resurrection, or the first creation of the world out of nothing.—A want of capacity in these subjects, is a want of Faith; and the surmise of the want of Faith in the common people, more than in their betters, is in truth a distrust of God; as if he should be wanting to his own work, and fail to give all men Faith to receive a discovery, made by his

his exprefs command, or rather by Himfelf, to all, of a fcheme of mercy in which all are interefted.

—“ The notion that religion and morality are the fame, generally as it has too long prevailed, needs no other confutation, but what will fpontaneoufly arife from a juft definition of the terms. Religion in the practical part is a ftudious conformity of our actions, our wills, and our appetites, to the revealed will of God, in pure regard to the divine authority, and to the relation, in which we ftand to God, as difcovered to us by revelation. Morality is a conformity of our actions to the relation in which we ftand to each other in civil fociety. Morality therefore comprehends fome confiderable part, but a part only, of the duties of the fecond table. Morality enjoins filial piety; it prohibits murder, adultery, theft, falfe witnefs, and thofe inferior crimes, which for the like harm that in a lefs degree they bring to fociety, or to the individual in fociety, bear affinity to thofe, as to the heads of fo many different fpecies. But does Morality fay, *Thou fhalt not covet* ? Does the control of moral obligation reach the fecret meditations of the mind, and the filent defires of the heart ?

heart? Does it impose restraint upon the sensuality of the imagination, and the private prurience of appetite? Like the Divine Law, does it extend to every secret energy of the mind, the will, and the appetite, and require the obedience of the inner as well as the outer man? Again, doth Morality say, *Thou shalt love thine enemies; thou shalt bless them that curse; do good to them that persecute?* Doth morality enjoin *forgiveness of injuries, or the giving of alms to the poor?* Truly, morality careth for none of these things. How small a part then of social duty, of a Christian's social duty, is the utmost which Morality exacts; and how fatally are they misled who are taught that mere Morality satisfies the law by which the Christian shall be judged, even in the inferior branch.

“ With the higher branch of duty, with the love of God, and of consequence with the duties of the first table, Morality hath evidently no concern or connection. The worship which I owe to God, is certainly no part of the duty which I owe to man. It is indifferent to Morality, whether I worship one God or many. Morality is not offended if I worship graven images. Morality enjoins no
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observance of one day in seven ; no feast of faith in sacramental rites upon the body and blood of the Redeemer. For Reason, from which Morality derives her whole authority and information ; Reason knows not, till she has been taught by the lively oracles of God, that the Creator of the world is the sole object of worship ; she knows of no prohibition of particular modes of worship ; she knows nothing of the creation of the world in seven days ; nothing of redemption ; nothing of the spiritual life, and the food brought down from Heaven for its sustenance. Morality, therefore, having no better instructress than this ignorant Reason, hath no sense or knowledge of any part of that great branch of duty which comes under the general title of devotion. Let me conjure you therefore, my brethren, to be cautious how you admit, much more how you propagate, that delusive dangerous maxim, that *morality is the sum of practical religion*, lest you place the totality and perfection of the thing in a very inconsiderable part."—So far the learned Prelate.

I shall not presume to add a word more upon the subject of religious instruction ; the application of the excellent reasoning here

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produced, is sufficiently obvious. Teachers of Charity Schools are the immediate subordinates of the clergy; and it is their indispensable duty to prepare their scholars for the examination of their respective ministers. The generality profess and attempt to do so, but with how little success I have endeavoured to shew, not with a view to injure, but to serve and assist them.—May the blessing of the Almighty attend the labours of all who unite in so important a cause as that of spreading the knowledge of Christianity among the Poor!

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